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A Qualitative Investigation of Intimate Partner Violence Victims' Experiences Across Gender and Sexuality



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Aims of the talk

- Brief overview of intimate partner violence and literature review
- Methodology used
- Preliminary findings
- Conclusions

My PhD

Aims to investigate the experiences of IPV victims across gender and sexuality. Four stages are:

- Study One: Systematic literature review of what literature is out there on IPV victimisation
- Study Two: Qualitative study looking in-depth at the experiences of victims
- Study Three: Quantitative study to look at prevalence rates of IPV across gender and sexuality (and characteristics involved)
- Study Four: Deliberative Inquiry involving support services and victims, to find a solution to the current issues around support

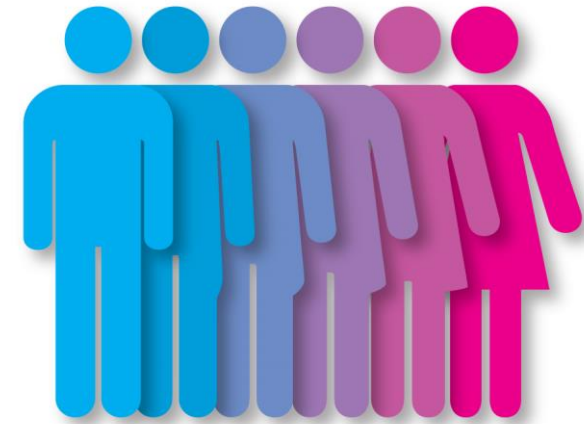
Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

- Victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) can experience multiple types of abuse: physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, and financial (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017)
- Abusive behaviours can range from punching, kicking, and pushing to stalking, isolation, and threats (Grose & Cabrera, 2011; Jaffe & Schub, 2011)
- Traditionally IPV has been thought to only occur within the framework of a male perpetrator and a female victim (Dobash, Dobash, Wilson & Daly, 1992)
- As research moves forward it is now acknowledged that IPV happens outside of this framework



Research into IPV

- The experiences of female IPV victims in opposite-sex relationships are well-documented (Langenderfer-Magruder et al., 2016)
- Research into male victims in opposite-sex relationships is increasing (e.g. Hines & Douglas, 2011; Próspero & Kim, 2009)
- The LGBTQ+ community is severely underrepresented in IPV research (Morin, 2014)

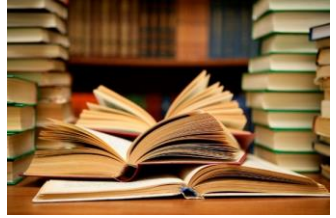


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Findings of Systematic Literature Review



The findings of my systematic literature review that informed this study were:

- Large majority of articles are about the experiences of female victims in opposite-sex relationships
- LGBTQ+ experiences are not investigated enough and tend to be “lumped together”
- Large majority were quantitative (83.66%) – very little exploration of individual experience
- A lot of cross-sectional studies – only few looking at long-term effects of abuse

Laskey, P., Bates, E.A. & Taylor, J.C. (2018). A Systematic Literature Review of Intimate Partner Violence Victimisation: An Inclusive Review Across Gender and Sexuality. Under Review

Aim and Rationale for Current Study

- To investigate the experiences of IPV victims across gender and sexuality
 - Highlights that IPV can happen to anyone regardless of gender and sexuality
- Look into individual experiences of IPV and the long-term effects it has
- To look at different experiences across different gender identities and sexual orientations in the same study to promote inclusivity
 - Useful if more studies were conducted in this way
 - Not easy, but necessary

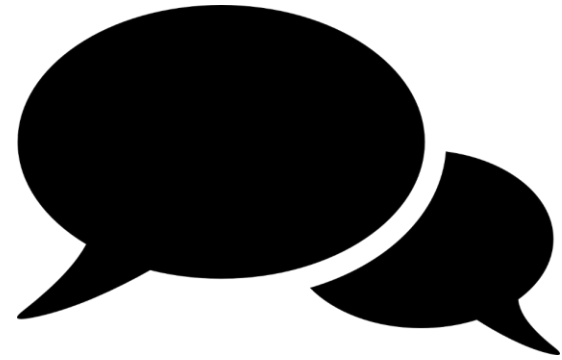
Methodology

- Semi-structured interviews with people who have experienced IPV victimisation in a previous relationship
 - Over 18
 - Live in UK
 - Relationship must have ended at least 6 months ago – for their safety, and mine
- Have interviewed 15 participants to date, but still need more from the LGBTQ+ community
- Analysis:
 - Content analysis – to inform measures to be used in stage three of my PhD
 - Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) – main analysis - more in-depth exploration of the themes

Preliminary Findings

Some of the following quotes might be upsetting
(Also, some swearing)

Physical Abuse

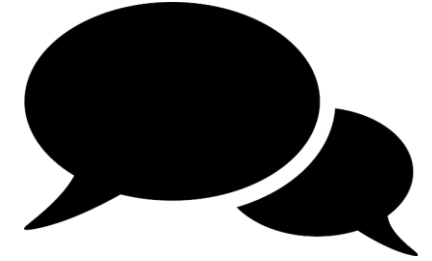


“...he picked me up and threw me at a wall, he absolutely kicked 9 bells out of me...I remember waking up on the slate tiles and looking at all the blood and thinking “whose blood’s on the kitchen floor?”...” (*Woman in OS relationship*)

“I was trying to leave the room because I was so upset and she wouldn’t let me out of the room so she pushed me to the floor” (*Trans man in relationship with a woman*)

“...I was like “look can we talk about this?” and...I was sort of barring the doorway and she just repeatedly hit me in the face with the door...” (*Man in OS relationship*)

Emotional and Verbal Abuse

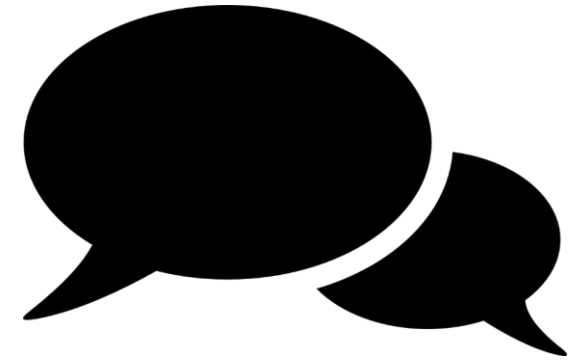


“...it was like spitting poison, that’s how I used to think of him, just spitting poison...my name towards the end was just “fucking bitch”” (*Woman in OS relationship*)

“By the last 2 years I really didn’t know who I was anymore cos all I was doing was constantly trying to...make the relationship work, you know since she started seeing this other person” (*Woman in SS relationship*)

“She had a propensity to using the “c” word...and that would come out whenever she was angry and then it would just be really derogatory...you’re not a man...lots of swearing lots of really aggressive confrontational language and it could be I put the wrong thing in a sandwich” (*Man in OS relationship*)

Controlling Behaviour

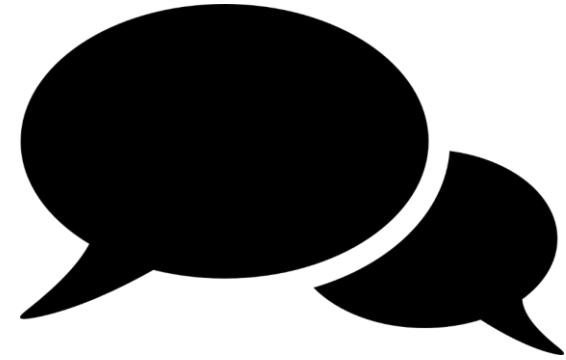


“I got an eating disorder when I was with him and I got it because of him, and he knew I got it because of him...he would laugh about it “that’s how much control I have over you” ...” (*Woman in OS relationship*)

“Do you know it wasn’t even arguments, she was very controlling, I was always walking on eggshells and I always felt that I had to do everything right, but at the same time I was never really sure what that right thing was” (*Woman in SS relationship*)

“She started really undermining my friendships with people, all the people I went out with, there was something wrong with them, they all blanked her or they were all horrible to her...she tore up my address book at one point with all my addresses in...trying to alienate me from everybody I knew” (Man in OS relationship)

Abuse Using the Children



“my elder daughter...physically he would pick her up and throw her across the room...my other daughter he allowed one of his friends...he permitted an 18-year-old person...to rape my 13-year-old daughter and from then on he sexually abused her...” (*Woman in OS relationship*)

“I didn’t know at the time but what she was doing to me, she was doing to my daughter but when I wasn’t around, and my daughter didn’t tell me because she thought that I was colluding with her, so for years my daughter thought that me and her were in this little plan to make my daughter’s life hell” (*Woman in SS relationship*)

“She (police officer) says “Your oldest daughter’s made an allegation of rape and sexual assault, against you, as a child” ...I do not know what’s happening at this time...and I realise this is abuse I am suffering abuse still...” (*Man in OS relationship*)

Abuse Unique to the LGBTQ+ Community

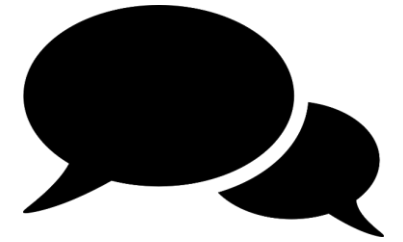


“...I’d said to her...I think I might be trans and she just said to me but you’re not a man I married a woman you’ll never be a man...I’d try and tell her that I’m still the same person and she’d say things like...she’s a lesbian and she wants to be with a woman and stuff like that which was gutting cos after I left she ended up with a man...” *(Trans man in relationship with woman)*

“You think of domestic violence and...it is something that you just think of as being heterosexual and a man doing it to a woman...when you say domestic violence that’s what the majority of people, me included, bring up” *(Woman in SS relationship)*

“I kind of identified as bisexual when I went into the relationship and she made it very very clear that I wasn’t allowed to, that I was lesbian, because she was...my sexuality was completely denied and when I came out of it I kind of had a bit of an identity crisis” *(Woman in SS relationship)*

Long-Term Effects of Abuse



“I would say at one point it was more difficult to be outside the relationship, than it was in...I’d spent so much money going to court cos he would litigate for everything, that I ended up representing myself...one year I was in court 10 times it was almost once a month...” (*Woman in OS relationship*)

“She’s shown up with her boyfriend threatening...it doesn’t seem to be settling down any either...trying to get her off the mortgage is an absolute pain in the arse...it’s been three years of trying to get her off the mortgage and it’s only just happening now.” (*Man in OS relationship*)

“I struggle now even sometimes, like if I meet new people, I’m reluctant to make friends with them as quickly, not because I don’t want to, but because there’s always in the back of my mind like “what if my partner doesn’t like them and doesn’t want me to hang around with them?” or anything because that’s what my ex used to do you know she used to pick and choose my friends for me...” (*Trans man in relationship with woman*)

Conclusions

- Some abuse happens across all victim groups, regardless of gender or sexuality
- Psychological abuse and controlling behaviours were more common than physical abuse
- The long-term effect of being a victim of IPV was highlighted
- Some abuse was unique to certain victim groups
 - LGBTQ+ people
- Perpetrators use the vulnerabilities of their partner – rather than gender or sexuality being a driver for abuse

Moving forward...

- Still need to complete full analysis
- The results from this research will hopefully raise awareness of IPV not being a gendered crime
- Will also inform the rest of my PhD
- It's only with this kind of evidence that policy and practice can be changed and made more inclusive

Questions?

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- Researchgate: www.researchgate.net/profile/Philippa_Laskey/
- Twitter: @PhilippaLaskey



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